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## HIGH SCHOOL SELF-GOVERNMENT

THE question of school government is not yet settled. Sometimes it seems that little progress is made. The general tendency is toward absolute despotism, and the desire seems to be only to secure at the head of the school a wise and beneficent despot. Here and there an attempt is made at student self-government, or rather of student participation in the government of the school. Many regard all such plans with suspicion, being opposed on fundamental principles to allowing students any share in governing other students. There seems to be great difficulty in distinguishing between a monitorial system, which tends, in the opinion of some, toward the establishment of false standards and undesirable relationships in the school, and a system by which students are prepared for the almost complete freedom of college life by a gradual approach toward freedom in their school days.

A just criticism on the German school system is that there is no transition from the gymnasium or other secondary schools to the university, but simply a tumble over a precipice from restraint absolute to liberty which, in this case, often is taken to mean license—the fall frequently breaking the student pretty completely. In Lawrenceville, and possibly one or two other academies, the boys in the graduating class reside by themselves and are allowed far more freedom and self-direction than students in the lower classes. Recently the students of the Warren (Pa.) High School have adopted a constitution and established a system of self-government which emanated from Superintendent W. L. MacGowan. He writes that students readily favor the scheme, and that where faculty and students favor it, and a wise person directs, the plan works smoothly. The plan as outlined in the constitution is likely to be of sufficient general interest to justify us in reproducing it, complete :

We, the students of the Warren High School, being desirous of establishing a system of self-government for the purpose of stimulating a feeling of self-respect among our number, and with the further object in view of better preparing ourselves for the future, when each must be the judge of his own conduct and course of action, do hereby adopt this constitution.

#### ARTICLE I.

SECTION 1. There shall be a senate, composed of representatives from the three classes, four from the senior class, three from the middle class, and three from the junior class. The president of the senate shall be chosen from the entire school by the senate.

SEC. 2. Three representatives shall be elected at the beginning of each semester, by the respective classes.

SEC. 3. No student who has not attended the Warren schools for at least one-half school year previous to his nomination shall be eligible to the senate.

SEC. 4. No student whose average standing in scholarship falls below 75 per cent. for the previous semester shall be eligible to the senate.

SEC. 5. No student whose misconduct during any semester has been of such degree as to bring him twice before the notice of the senate and principal, shall be eligible to the senate during the following semester.

SEC. 6. All students having less than six counts shall vote with the junior class, and all students having less than thirteen counts shall vote with the middle class.

#### ARTICLE II.

SECTION 1. In case a vacancy occurs in the office of senator on account of resignation, or other cause, the class, in whose representation the vacancy occurs, shall, upon receiving due notice of such vacancy from the president, proceed to elect within ten days a successor, and shall notify the senate of the result of such election.

SEC. 2. The senate shall hold a regular meeting on the Wednesday of every other week. Special meetings may be called at any time by the president.

SEC. 3. Any senator may be removed from office for flagrant violation of the rules laid down in this constitution, or for non-attendance to the duties of his office. The senate shall recommend the removal

of such member, and the school shall decide his removal by a two-thirds vote.

SEC. 4. The senate shall enforce all rules laid down in this constitution and shall have power to recommend punishment for all infringements of its regulations.

SEC. 5. A quorum to do all ordinary business shall consist of five members.

SEC. 6. It shall be the duty of each senator to take note of all students breaking any of the rules laid down in this constitution. When a senator shall have noticed any student breaking any rule or rules three times in two weeks, he shall report such student to the principal, who will keep a list of the names of students so reported. The members of the faculty shall have the same power of reporting any misdemeanors. The principal shall present this list at every meeting of the senate, and the punishment of the students reported shall be considered.

SEC. 7. Deportment shall be marked the same as a study (*i. e.*, the standard shall be 100), and shall have the same value as a study in reckoning the general average.

SEC. 8. The punishment of common misdemeanors shall be such a lowering of the grade in deportment of the individual as the senate shall deem right. This punishment the senate shall have power to inflict without the approval of the faculty. All other punishments shall require the approval of the faculty before being carried into effect. The faculty shall have control of examinations, and shall make such regulations as they think best.

#### ARTICLE III.

RULE 1. In the main study room no communication shall take place between students either by writing, voice, or sign, unless this communication pertains to studies. Should a student wish to communicate with any other student on matters relative to study he shall go to the person with whom he wishes to consult, and converse in such a manner as not to disturb his fellow students. This rule shall also apply to the period before school opens.

RULE 2. Passage of students to and from classes, up and down stairs, and through the hallways shall be in an orderly and quiet manner. No collection of students in the hallways shall be allowed.

RULE 3. Strict attention will be required of all students during chapel exercises and roll-call.

RULE 4. Students shall have the privilege of leaving the room, but they shall first obtain the permission of a member of the faculty, if one be present, otherwise this permission shall be granted by a senator. In case of emergency a student may leave the room without permission. Each student leaving the room shall record his name and the time of his absence on the blackboard. Only one of each set may be absent at a time, and no student shall be absent more than ten minutes.

RULE 5. During school hours, order shall be maintained in every part of the building. Disturbance by any means, such as the throwing of missiles, or the making of unnecessary noises by the voice, shall not be tolerated.

RULE 6. Leaving the room without permission, except in case of emergency, or leaving the room and not returning before close of session, shall be deemed worthy the notice of the senate without further misdemeanor on the part of the individual.

For the carrying out of the preceding rules, let the honor of the pupils be relied upon. And may it be the wish of each student to see these regulations observed.

#### ARTICLE IV.

SECTION 1. The senate shall have power to add to this constitution, or to amend any article or articles herein contained, but such amendment shall be approved by a majority of each of the three classes.

SEC. 2. The rules and regulations of the Board of Directors, as far as they pertain to the high school, shall be considered a part of this instrument.

SEC. 3. To establish this constitution it must be ratified by each of the three classes of the high school. In voting on the ratification, the vote of every student shall be recorded by the secretary of each class.

In case other schools have tried or are trying similar experiments we trust they will communicate plans and results, so far as any have been obtained, to us, that we may report the progress along this line from time to time. A wise general agitation of the subject is now called for.

C. H. THURBER